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SONG OF THE BIRTH

BY CONSTANCE LINDSAY SKINNER

K'antsamiq 'ala[1] Soē gives life.
He is the life, so comes birth.
He is the spirit, so comes being,
He is His Name— the "All-Encompassing,
Supreme Highest Praised One."
With His finger makes He the little picture on the earth;
With His breath He blesses it, smiles, and is content —
So comes a man!
Yea, a great man, mighty, kind and swift,
Is but a little picture of the Highest One
That grows from a babe: (it grows because it is of life).
So He grows also, in the making and blessing of men —
Because He is the life, never ending, never quiet,
Because He is the Strong One, the Pure Maker, never ceasing from good.
How great a thing therefore is this little birth!
Men and women of the Tribe, I am His priest and charge you:
Now comes this picture from His Hand, sacred and mystical,
See ye mar not His little picture, blest with His breath.
This is your service of thanks to Him for making you
With the life that grows.
Ask ye, wherefore the growing?
It is to reach to His height in tallness, to widen to His forehead in wisdom,
To beat with the untired strength of His great heart in loving.
So encompass ye your Tribe with smiling goodness and service;
As this mother is about her babe,
As this man about this mother,
As the waters round this land, and the stars about these waters,
As K'antsamiq 'ala Soē is about His world.

[1] *K'antsamiq 'ala Soē*=Supreme Highest Praised One; Kwakiutl Tribe, British Columbia Coast.